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Metro will not be publishing over the holidays. The next edition will appear Jan. 4, 2010.

PHOTOS BY THE CANADIAN PRESS

Images of the decade: Michael Jackson (clockwise from top left), Canadian troops in Afghanistan, the global economic collapse and the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

Defining a difficult decade

Was it the decade when bankers' greed caused a worldwide financial meltdown, or will it be terrorism or technology that people associate with the first 10 years of the 21st century?

Opinions vary, with authors, journalists, comedians and futurists zeroing in on different facets of this decade. But most agree the era is more likely to be remembered as a toxic time than a golden age.

"I will remember it as a frightening decade," said Linden MacIntyre, longtime CBC journalist and 2009 winner of the Giller Prize, the country's top literary award.

The United States set the pessimistic tone early on and led the way on most of the issues that shaped the period, MacIntyre said.

The outcome of the 2000 election was controversial — George W. Bush won, but acrimony lingered — and the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the U.S. proved to be a turning point. MacIntyre said 9-11 and the international reaction sparked a climate of fear that would persist for years to come.

It's a view shared by comedian Rick Mercer, who strove to give Canadians a break from the unrelenting negativity through his blistering political and social satire.

Calling the decade a time that people would "rather forget," Mercer said the paranoia that followed 9-11 was eventually succeeded by anxiety over the foundering global economy.

In Canada, the emergence of a strengthened Conservative party, coupled with the Liberals' waning fortunes, led to three successive minority governments that highlighted national tensions.

"Elections every year and a half, that's great for my business," said Mercer. "If you view politics as people view sports, elections are like the Super Bowl, and I want one every year."

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Top Vancouver stories in 2009

There were many stories that captivated Vancouverites in 2009, here are Metro's picks for the top ten stories of the year.

10 Ryan Jenkins manhunt. A cross-border hunt for a man believed to have strangled and mutilated his ex-wife in Los Angeles ended in Hope in August, when suspect Ryan Jenkins' body was found hanging from a coat rack in a motel.

Jenkins, a reality TV star, was the only suspect in the death of swimsuit model Jasmine Fiores. Police chased Jenkins from California, to British Columbia, where he committed suicide.

Ryan Jenkins, right, was a suspect in the death of Jasmine Fiores, left.

9 Burrard Bridge. The great Burrard Bridge debate was much ado about nothing. In July, the city closed one southbound lane forced all pedestrians onto the west side of the bridge and opened two dedicated bike lanes. Traffic was largely unaffected.

8 Female ski jumpers. A group of elite-level female ski jumpers took VANOC to court in the spring of 2009, for not staging a women's ski jumping event during the 2010 Games.

A B.C. Supreme Court judge, however, ruled that it was up to the IOC — not VANOC — as to whether they should jump.

7 Robert Dziekanski. The public watchdog for the RCMP released a scathing report on Dec. 8 criticizing the four officers involved in the Tasering of Robert Dziekanski at Vancouver's airport in 2007.

6 Surrey Six. In April, a year and a half after six people were murdered in a Surrey highrise, RCMP arrested and charged four men in connection with the gang-style shootings.

One of the men, alleged Red Scorpions gang member Dennis Karbovanec, immediately plead guilty to three of the murders, including that of innocent bystander Chris Mohan.

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Vancouver's Athletes' Village takes shape on the southeast side of False Creek in February.

5 HST. B.C. hit the ballot boxes in May and returned Premier Gordon Campbell and his B.C. Liberals to power for a third straight term. Shortly after, in July, the province announced it was merging its provincial sales tax with the federal goods and services tax to create a single 12 per cent Harmonized Sales Tax, beginning July 1, 2010.

4 Olympic Torch. The Olympic torch, unveiled in Whistler in February, was ignited during an elaborate ceremony in Greece in October. The torch was flown to Victoria to kickoff the 45,000-kilometre torch relay. The torch will return to B.C. in late January and make its way to Vancouver in time for the Feb. 12 start to the Olympic Games.

3 Fires. Thousands of people living in the Interior were evacuated from their homes in July and August as massive wildfires as large as 3,000 hectares raged through the tinder-try forests.

There were no reported injuries or deaths.

2 Olympic Village. In November, Vancouver handed over the keys to its $1.2-billion Southeast False Creek development to VANOC to use as the Athletes' Village during the Games. The development had run into difficulty when overruns forced its financier to withhold loan payments.

1 Canada Line. On Aug. 17, about 100,000 people for the first time rode The Canada Line connecting downtown Vancouver to the airport in just 26 minutes. The $2-billion line, an Olympic legacy project, has changed the way Vancouverites get to Richmond.

METRO VANCOUVER

Great outdoor winter fun for everyone

ANDREA WOO
for Metro Vancouver

WINTER Vancouverites staying in town over the holidays have a wealth of fun, varied and unconventional winter activities right in their own backyard, according to a local tourism expert.

Amber Sessions, travel media relations specialist at Tourism Vancouver, says the city's proximity to both urban and nature settings means a wide range of activities to choose from.

"That's what makes us really different," she said. "That's our unique selling point."

Fans of the outdoors, for example, can zipline off Grouse Mountain at 80 km/h, soaring across the peaks of Grouse and Dam mountains. Those who prefer more traditional activities can ski, snowboard, snowshoe, ice skate or hop on a sleigh ride at Grouse.

Sessions also recommends a trip to Mount Seymour, which is offering an "evening guided fondue tour" that begins with a two-and-a-half-hour snowshoe trek through forested trails and ends with fondue in a hand-carved snow lounge.

Within the city, people can check out the new Greenheart Canopy Walkway at UBC Botanical Garden.

"It's like a mini Capilano Suspension Bridge, but with a real focus on ecology," said Sessions. "They do guided tours, and you walk across this bridge and get to be right up in the treetop canopy."

Also on site are the Belkin Art Gallery, museum of anthropology and UBC farm.

For a day trip, Sessions recommends catching a water taxi from Granville Island to Bowen Island, which she calls a burgeoning tourist destination. This year, it will host various Christmas events in the Artisan and Village squares, including the lighting of the cove.

"Bowen Island has so much to offer," she said. "For a local, that would be somewhere so close and so fun to go to."

For foodies, Edible British Columbia offers chef-guided walking tours through Granville Island, Chinatown and Commercial Drive.

"You go with a chef and get to do all these yummy tastings and samplings," said Sessions. "You get to experience these places that you think you know, but you don't know, really."

Holiday activities

Some ways to keep busy over the Christmas break

- Check out some of these festive annual traditions going on around Metro Vancouver.
- **CANADA PLACE.** Watch the iconic sails transform into an array of light, colour and animation with spectacular nightly light shows on the sails. Go to christmas.canadaplace.ca for more.
- **STANLEY PARK.** Take a train ride through a forest illuminated by two million twinkling lights and enjoy animated displays and holiday sounds at the 12th Annual Bright Nights in Stanley Park. Go to vancouver.ca/parks for more.
- **CAPILANO SUSPENSION BRIDGE.** Enjoy the Christmas band that performs four times nightly and check out the more than 250,000 twinkling lights throughout the park. Go to capbridge.com for more.
- **VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN** Enjoy community choirs and more than a million twinkling lights at the 2009 Festival of Lights. Go to vandusengarden.org for more.
- **WILD NEW YEAR'S EVE CRUISE.** Ring in the new year aboard Harbour Cruise's MV Britannia, with three levels, two DJs and two dance floors. Dec. 31. Go to boatcruises.com for more.
- **POLAR BEAR SWIM.** Cure your New Year's Eve hangover by taking an icy dip in English Bay as part of the 90th annual Polar Bear Swim.

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Stories that shaped 2009

Year in Review

A look back at the top national and international news events of 2009:

JANUARY

15 — US Airways jet crash lands in Hudson River in New York City; all 155 on board survive and pilot Chesley Sullenberger is hailed as hero.

20 — Barack Obama is sworn in as U.S. president.

27 — Minority Conservative government delivers budget promising $40 billion in economic stimulus over two years.

FEBRUARY

9 — Syncrude Canada is charged with breaking environmental laws in the deaths of hundreds of waterfowl at tailing pond near Fort McMurray, Alta.

17 — Obama signs into law $787-billion US stimulus package.

MARCH

5 — Vincent Li is found not criminally responsible for beheading passenger on Greyhound bus in August 2008.

19 — Josef Fritzl of Austria, who locked his daughter in a dungeon for 24 years and fathered her seven children, is sentenced to life in a psychiatric ward.

APRIL

6 — Earthquake devastates Abruzzo region of central Italy, killing nearly 300 people.

30 — About 1,200 Halifax-area residents evacuated by brush fire.

MAY

2 — Michael Ignatieff formally claims the Liberal leadership.

8 — Health authorities confirm Canada's first H1N1 death, a woman in northern Alberta.

20 — Two Woodstock, Ont., residents are charged in the death of Tori Stafford, 8; her body was found on July 19.

25 — Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean eats a piece of raw seal heart in Arctic.

CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

April 29 — A girl is seen outside Mexico's National Institute of Respiratory Diseases after being checked for H1N1. Canada reported its first confirmed cases three days earlier.

Oct. 15 — Authorities chase a balloon for 80 kilometres after parents of six-year-old boy said he was inside.

North Korea reports it successfully conducted an underground nuclear test.

JUNE

1 — General Motors files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in U.S.

11 — WHO declares H1N1 flu outbreak a pandemic.

12 — Iranians vote in presidential election that sparks massive protests.

29 — Bernard Madoff is sentenced to 150 years behind bars for defrauding investors.

JULY

3 — Former Republican U.S. vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin quits as Alaska's governor.

8 — Chinese troops swarm the capital of western Xinjiang after ethnic riots leave at least 156 dead.

14 — Canada slaps visa requirements on citizens of Mexico and Czech Republic, citing surge in refugee claims.

30 — Cpl. Matthew Wilcox found guilty in the shooting of a fellow soldier.

AUGUST

2 — About 2,300 people are ordered out of their homes as wildfire threatens Lillooet, B.C.

5 — Ottawa Mayor Larry O'Brien is found not guilty of influence peddling.

7 — Settlement announced in class-action lawsuit filed over abuse by priests in Nova Scotia since 1950.

20 — Millions vote in Afghanistan's first democratic presidential election run by Afghans in decades.

SEPTEMBER

7 — Three British Muslim extremists are convicted of 2006 conspiracy to blow up airliners bound for U.S. and Canada using liquid explosives.

26 — Director Roman Polanski is arrested in Switzerland on a 1978 warrant for having sex with a 13-year-old girl.

OCTOBER

9 — Obama is awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

22 — Quebec government announces police investigation into allegations of corruption in province's construction industry.

26 — Most provinces and territories begin offering H1N1 flu shots.

29 — Quebec and New Brunswick reach deal for Hydro-Quebec to buy majority of N.B. Power's assets for $4.8 billion.

NOVEMBER

2 — Afghan President Hamid Karzai is declared the victor of country's disputed election.

5 — Thirteen people are killed in shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, military base.

7 — U.S. House of Representatives narrowly passes landmark health-care bill.

18 — Former Canadian diplomat Richard Colvin tells Commons committee that prisoners were likely tortured after being handed by Canada to Afghan authorities in 2006-07.

25 — Canadian journalist Amanda Lindhout and an Australian colleague are freed 15 months after they were abducted in Somalia.

DECEMBER

1 — President Obama orders 30,000 more U.S. troops to be deployed in Afghanistan.

7 — UN conference on climate change gets underway in Copenhagen.

9 — MPs vote in favour of harmonized sales tax for Ontario and B.C.

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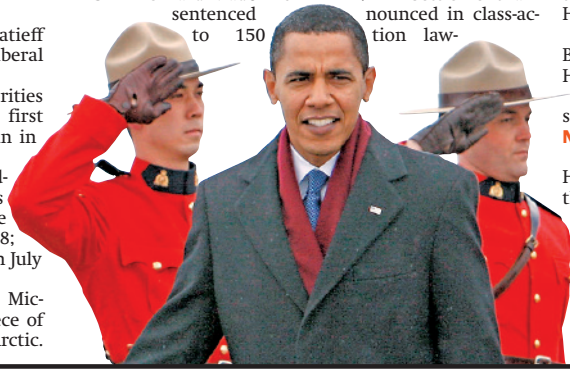

Feb. 19 — U.S. President Barack Obama is in Ottawa on his first official foreign visit.

The fallen

Canadian soldiers who gave their lives in Afghanistan

- Trooper Brian Good
- Sapper Sean Greenfield
- Warrant Officer Dennis Raymond Brown
- Cpl. Dany Olivier Fortin
- Cpl. Kenneth Chad O'Quinn
- Trooper Marc Diab
- Master-Cpl. Scott Vernelli
- Cpl. Tyler Crooks
- Trooper Jack Bouthillier
- Trooper Corey Joseph Hayes
- Trooper Karine Blais
- Private Alexandre Peloquin
- Cpl. Nicholas Bulger
- Master Cpl. Charles-Philippe Michaud
- Master Cpl. Patrice Audet
- Cpl. Martin Joannette
- Pte. Sebastien Courcy
- Sapper Matthieu Allard
- Cpl. Christian Bobbitt
- Cpl. Darby Morin
- Major Yannick Pepin
- Cpl. Jean-Francois Drouin
- Pte. Patrick Lormand
- Pte. Jonathan Couturier
- Lt. Justin Boyes
- Sapper Steven Marshall

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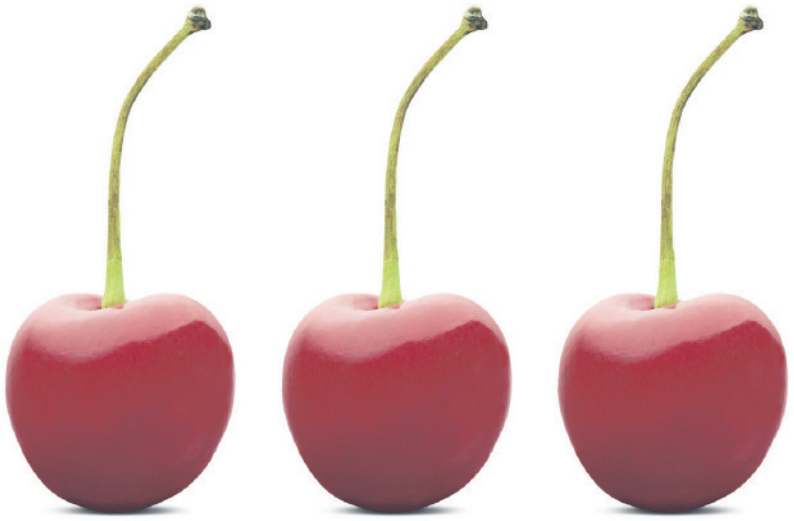

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Comment

Harper machine remains well-oiled

NationalReport

Lawrence Martin

metronews.ca/nationalreport

The recession never became a depression. We didn't have an election. Another Liberal leader was eaten alive. The Harper machine solidified its grip. The hope of never again going into deficit died a mighty death.

But the year couldn't compare to the hurly-burly of 2008, which featured the re-election of the Conservatives and their subsequent brush with death when a coalition almost ousted them. In 2009, we had lots of noise, lots of election threats, but no big change in the political standings.

There was some expectation that the ideological transition in the United States would trigger a liberal trend north of the border, but the Obama effect never came to pass. The young in this country stayed turned off and tuned out of politics, which depressingly has become a game for only the middle-aged and old folk.

The year began auspiciously for Michael Ignatieff, who replaced the wobbly Stéphane Dion. For the first half of 2009 he appeared capable of unseating Stephen Harper. But the tide began to turn against him when he put in a listless summer. He then made the disastrous mistake of trying to force an election without giving the voter any compelling reason, in terms of new policy initiatives, for doing so. His support level collapsed to levels Dion had not even reached.

Stephen Harper

The Conservatives, meanwhile, became heavy-spending Keynesians, combatting the recession with old-time liberal religion. Recessions usually give life to the political left, but the Greens were unable to increase their support while the NDP made few gains.

Harper maintained his image as a shrewd and crude political strategist, using every trick to smear his rivals and block them from legitimate avenues of inquiry. He then turned the tables on his image as a cold, calculating leader by taking to the stage to perform a piano-and-song rendition of a Beatles number. It was a media sensation.

By year's end problems were accumulating for the Conservatives. Their inaction on global warming was denounced at home and abroad. The Afghanistan detainees affair saw them trying to fight off charges of a coverup. And having promised no deficits 13 months earlier, their books were now forecasting a whopping deficit of $60 billion.

Nevertheless, with the Opposition Liberals still appearing rather hapless, the Conservatives were well in command to begin their fifth year as a minority government. Minorities aren't supposed to last so long. Stephen Harper was defying the odds.

Lawrence Martin is a journalist and author of 10 books who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.

Views

Hot issues for the year that lies ahead

TheWestView

Paul Sullivan

metronews.ca/thewestview

It's that time of year again, when columnists are faced with two choices: Look back and pick the top stories or events that shaped the year just passed, or look ahead and predict what's coming down the pike.

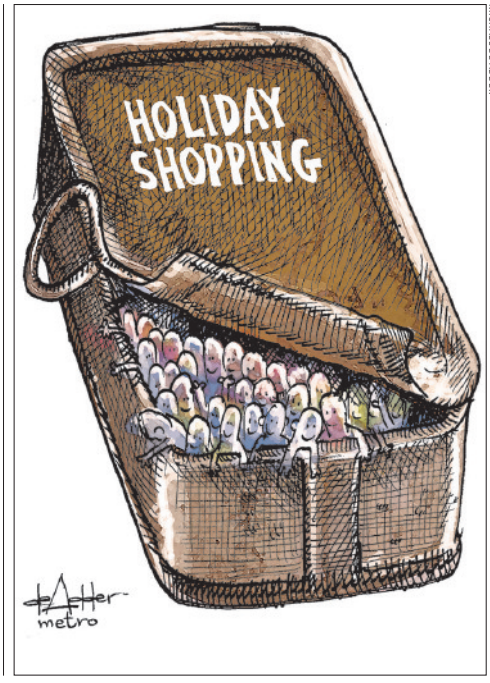
The former is safer ground. That stuff actually happened. But it's more fun lurching into the future, and why worry? No one ever remembers if you're right or wrong.

So onward! Here are Sullivan's Fearless Predictions for 2010! Guaranteed to come true!

Or not.

- Canada will get off the snide and actually win a few Olympic gold medals on home turf in Vancouver. But not as many as we like. When the women's curling favourite is someone called Binyu Wang, it's clear the rest of the world is learning how to play in the snow, too.
- Tiger Woods will be a lonely guy in 2010. And worth half as much. He may be the athlete of the decade, but that doesn't cut any ice at home. He had it all, but wanted more. The upside? He will have more time for golf with the ex-wife and kids barricaded on an island in Sweden. So he'll be playing the field, and by that I mean other guys in plaid pants.
- Greed is not so good: The price of gold will go below $1,000 US an ounce. I love this quote from Warren Buffett, the second richest man in America: "Gold gets dug out of the ground in Africa, or someplace. Then we melt it down, dig another hole, bury it again and pay people to stand around guarding it. It has no utility. Anyone watching from Mars would be scratching their head."
- Stephen Harper will still be prime minister this time next year unless a miracle occurs and Michael Ignatieff gets his head out of his, um … book. But Harper should keep an eye on Jean Charest. As they say about New York, if you can make it in Quebec, you can make it anywhere.
- Global Warning. Not a typo. The British Met office predicts 2010 will be the hottest year ever, hotter than 1998. Glaciers will continue to melt. Oceans will continue to rise. Deniers will continue to deny. But you better hurry and book that Florida vacation — if this keeps up, 50 per cent of its beaches will be underwater.
- We will not find other life in the universe in 2010. Wouldn't it be weird if we're the only ones? It would serve us right.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting; vancouverletters@metronews.ca.



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Sports

Jimmie Johnson is the first driver in NASCAR history to win four straight titles.

Athletes of the year

Jimmie Johnson, Serena Williams top of the class in 2009

JIMMIE JOHNSON

There was little recognition outside the racing world when Jimmie Johnson won his first NASCAR championship.

Same with his second, and again with his third.

But four straight championships? That's a different story.

Johnson, the first driver in NASCAR history to win four consecutive titles, earned mainstream recognition this week when he was honoured as the Male Athlete of the Year by members of The Associated Press.

Johnson received 42 votes from editors at U.S. newspapers which are members of the AP. Tennis star Roger Federer (30 votes) and Olympic sprinter Usain Bolt (29) were the only other athletes with totals in the double-digits.

Although Tiger Woods was named Athlete of the Decade, the golfer received only nine votes for Athlete of the Year.

He was tied with NBA star Kobe Bryant and slugger Albert Pujols.

For Johnson, the first racecar driver to be named the AP's Athlete of the Year in its 78-year history, the award is the validation he's been waiting for since he began his historic run in 2006.

"We'd been wondering the last few years, 'When is this going to hit?'" he said. "It seems like the answer is now. The wave is finally peaking, and we don't know where it's going to take us.

"The fourth-straight title takes it out of our sport and makes it a point of discussion — like, 'Wow, a race car driver won this thing.'"

The 34-year-old Californian again schooled the competition, winning four of his seven races.

In the 10 Chase races, Johnson finished outside the top-10 only once: when he wrecked at Texas with Sam Hornish Jr. three laps into the eighth race.

The crash proved Johnson's mettle, as he sat inside his car, helmet on, for more than an hour as crew chief Chad Knaus led a total rebuild of his Chevrolet so that Johnson could return to the track.

SERENA WILLIAMS

Playing her best at the most important events, American Serena Williams re-established herself as the top player in women's tennis in 2009 and was a landslide choice as Female Athlete of the Year by members of The Associated Press.

Williams received 66-of-158 votes cast by editors at U.S. newspapers that are members of the AP. No other candidate got more than 18 votes in the tally, which was announced this week.

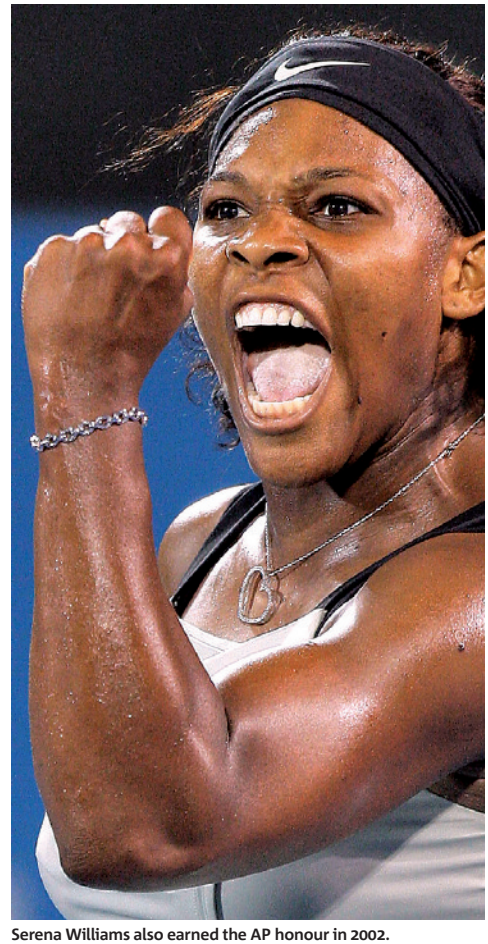
Clearly, Williams' most infamous on-court episode — a tirade directed at a line judge after a foot-fault call near the end of her U.S. Open semifinal loss in September — didn't hurt her standing in the eyes of the voters.

"People realize that I'm a great player, and one moment doesn't define a person's career," Williams told the AP. "And I was right, for the most part: It wasn't right the way I reacted — I never said it was — but I was right about the call."

Williams, who is based in Florida, also won the AP award in 2002, a seven-year gap that is the longest between AP Female Athlete of the Year honours since golf's Patty Berg won in 1943 and 1955.

"I'm just happy and blessed to even be playing seven years later." Williams said. "In 2002, I just was really dominant, and ... I just brought that back."

Williams finished the year at No. 1 in the WTA rankings. She topped $6.5 million in prize money, breaking the single-season tour record by more than $1 million. She won three significant singles titles — Wimbledon, the Australian Open and the season-ending tour championships. She also paired with sister Venus to win three Grand Slam doubles titles. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Serena Williams also earned the AP honour in 2002.

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Shopping

Get geeked on tech toys

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Boxing Day is a great time to pick up those cool tidbits of gadget heaven that you already have in mind. Here are a few goodies to consider during the inevitable shopping rush:

UNDER $100:

Bodyguard Cinema iPhone Case - $34.99

The iPhone certainly isn't known for being one of the sturdiest contraptions, meaning some sort of protective case is necessary if you're at all clumsy. Belkin's Bodyguard Cinema takes away the need to find something to prop up your iPhone every time you want to sit back and enjoy a video because it has a kickstand built right into the body of the case.

Logitech Anywhere MX Mouse - $89.99

For the truly bohemian computer user, the Anywhere MX Mouse is a wireless, laser mouse that literally works anywhere, on any surface even including glass, that long-time nemesis of laser mice.

UNDER $200:

DJ Hero for Nintendo Wii - $129.99

DJ Hero is a ton of fun and really adds a fresh twist to the music-timing game genre by recreating the feel of being a real DJ in a way that doesn't feel egregiously out of whack with reality.

Gigabit Powerline HD adapter - $149 - $179

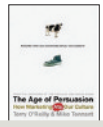
If you want to stream HD video from your computer the he Gigabit Powerline HD adapter wins big points for being extremely simple. The system uses two small adapters that plug directly into wall sockets with one connecting to your Internet router and the other into devices like computers, TVs and gaming consoles. The latest firmware updates, which strengthen the signal when broadcasting between rooms.

BIG TICKET BUY:

Sony Bravia VE5 Eco Series 40-inch LCD HDTV - $1,999.99

The Bravia line is a best-seller for Sony and for good reason — the TVs have bright, crisp colours and excellent picture quality.

Metro's book picks of the year



The Age of Persuasion: How Marketing Ate Our Culture

Author: Terry O'Reilly & Mike Tennant
Publisher: Knopf Canada
Price: $34.95 (Hardcover)

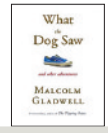
Penned by the creators of the CBC Radio program The Age of Persuasion, the book of the same title explores advertising in an attempt to demystify the medium and explain the strategies various forms employ to capture our attention.

The authors explore branding, jingles, celebrity endorsements, YouTube's relationship with marketing and many other phenomena since advertising's early days, deconstructing the implanted motivations and quashing misconceptions, like the belief advertisers intentionally make irritating spots to stay memorable. Splashed with sidebars explaining advertising terms and key moments in marketing history, The Age of Persuasion will turn you from ad target to active engager.

Ecoholic Home

Author: Adria Vasil
Publisher: Vintage Canada
Price:$24.95 (Paperback)

Whether choosing a cleaning product, fixing a broken window or buying new appliances, gauging the greenest household applications can be a challenge given the research and variety of resources available. In Ecoholic Home, Adria Vasil centralizes her eco-smarts, based on her column Ecoholic for Toronto alternative weekly Now Magazine. The book expands upon Vasil's regular doses of green living tips, from the kitchen, through the garden, to the garage. Part product guide, part practice handbook, Ecoholic Home provides both do-it-yourself and store-bought solutions to wastefulness and environmental harm while promoting individual health. Using accessible language and an organized layout, Vasil's guide is a useful companion for every eco-conscious consumer.



What the Dog Saw

Author: Malcolm Gladwell
Publisher: Little, Brown
Price: $34.99 (Hardcover)

Following the success of his first three books The Tipping Point, Blink and Outliers, Canadian essayist and New Yorker regular Malcolm Gladwell compiles some of his finest published pieces in What the Dog Saw.

The collection includes the lesser-known histories of figures like kitchen gadget guru Ron Popeil and John Rock, creator of the pill.

It also includes Gladwell's varied investigations, from the singularity of ketchup to the overall failings of statistical prognosis.

While not always rooted in traditional scientific reasoning, Gladwell's novel methods of bridging two seemingly unrelated ideas and exploring the fantastic sides of the familiar are entertainingly written in his always refreshing, studied approach.

Book Picks Of The Year

Eating Animals

Author: Jonathan Safran Foer
Publisher: Little, Brown & Company
Price: $31.99 (Hardcover)

From the author of Everything is Illuminated comes a memoir-cum-investigation into food habits, motivated by Jonathan Safran Foer's contemplation about which diet he should raise his son on.

The book follows Foer both into an industrial turkey farm where the animals are being reared in disturbing conditions and a humane one, where he realizes animals need not suffer in the pre-slaughter.

Though his conclusion is ill defined, it reflects the multifaceted natures of arguments for and against eating meat. Foer fuses first-hand experience with his personal history, philosophy, popular truth and myth, and scientific research in this engaging, motivating inquiry into the ethics of omnivorism.

BRIAN COULTON/
FOR METRO CANADA

Shift your automobile gifts into high gear

MARK ATKINSON
for Metro Canada

CARS A car fanatic in your family? Or a gearhead yourself? Here are some great automotive accessory ideas to spend them on this Boxing Day:

Compustar 1-Way Remote Starter

A full-featured Remote Start system keeps your vehicle warm during the winter and provides convenience for you and your passengers. It even works from up to 600m away. Available at Future Shop for $149.99.

Martini Racing Sweat Jacket

This Porsche Design men's jacket features deep side pockets and the iconic Porsche logo embroidered on the back. Comes in sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL for $194 at your local Porsche dealer.

BMW Baby Racer II

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E1 ENTERTAINMENT

During the holidays
For more celebrity health and beauty news during the holidays, visit metronews.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Health & Beauty

Time to look after yourself

Find everything you need unwind after the hectic holidays

JANINE FALCON
for Metro Canada

So you asked for a professional flat iron and he got you... an iron. Well, fixing that gift-blunder yourself is what Boxing Day is for, especially when it comes to stocking up on beauty treats.

"We've noticed that men go straight for the electronics department, and while they're checking out big-screen TVs and Wii units, the women head for the beauty department," says Wayne Peterson, divisional vice president of cosmetics and fragrance for Sears Canada, about post-Dec. 25 shopping.

"Women have spent the holidays looking after everyone else; this is the time they needs to look after themselves."

Understandably, bath sets and spa collections in particular are big attractions.

But it's not all about what didn't sell before the holidays — enticements include travel and trial-size sets from brands such as Shiseido, Estée Lauder and Clinique, brought in specially for the Boxing-Day shopping stretch into early January.

"Informally, we call this time for women 'All About Me,'" says Peterson. "Our sales advisors keep that in mind as they help customers find everything they need to pamper themselves."

Haircare and styling tools are also hot commodities, and should be even more so in Sears' new-concept beauty departments at Square One in Mississauga, Ont., and Mapleview Centre in Burlington, Ont.

In place of traditional beauty counters are spacious aisles and open shelving, as well as compact demo stations where customers can sit for a cosmetics application or learn how to augment hairstyles with Ken Paves Hairdo extensions.

According to Rhonda Sorenson, beauty boutique manager at The Ritz location of Shoppers Drug Mart in downtown Vancouver, fragrance, hair and bath-and-body products are a huge draw at drugstores on Dec. 26.

"Customers also come looking for anything Quo Holiday, and for the skincare and haircare value sets that come out just before the 25th," Sorensen says.

Just as in the department stores, watch for special sampler kits from Biotherm, Lise Watier and Elizabeth Arden, for instance, which are worth significantly more than the purchase price.

"Occasionally, prestige fragrance companies will offer limited-edition 30-mL bottle sizes for under $25," she adds.

But don't expect many festive gift sets to wait around until the big sales. "Makeup collections like the Lancôme Juicy Tubes Holiday Set of eight glosses — those go before Christmas," confirms Sorensen.

"But you might find other pre-holiday sets from then that are further discounted."

And if you're in a forgiving mood, you'll clean up on men's skincare starter kits, too.

How to eat healthy over the holidays

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

As the holiday season heats up, there's no need to get stressed about what you can and can't eat. Keep it simple, follow some basic guidelines, but don't sweat the details.

"Healthy eating is far easier than you might think," reports Dr. Frank Sacks, professor of cardiovascular disease prevention in the Nutrition Department at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, Mass. In Harvard's booklet Healthy Eating, Sacks and colleagues outline the best ways to maintain your weight and fend off heart disease, hypertension, osteoporosis and some forms of cancer.

"Are there foods you should never eat?" they ask. "Not really. No matter how laden with saturated or trans fats, how devoid of nutrients or how high its glycemic load, there's no food you can't eat occasionally." In the spirit of the season, if you crave candy cane ice cream, a pastry at the office party, or chips from the buffet, that's OK every now and then, but make sure to choose healthier snacks at home.

"Healthy eating is not like many of the popular weight-loss plans that require you to eliminate certain foods entirely," report the authors. While you don't have to be perfect, there are some "baddies" you should eat only rarely. On the Harvard list of foods to keep to a minimum: red meat, high-fat dairy foods, sugary treats such as candy, drinks with added sugar, donuts and pastries such as cookies, pies, and high-fat muffins.

Balancing this out are foods that definitely get the green light: fruits and vegetables, nuts, fish, poultry, eggs and low-fat dairy products. As much as possible, go for whole grain breads and pastas instead of white, brown rice instead of white, and less-processed grains such as steel-cut oats. Oil can be healthy, if you use plant oils such as olive, sunflower, canola and other vegetable oils.

Here's to happy, healthy eating.

Get rid of that holiday hangover with exercise and water

SOFI PAPAMARKO
for Metro Canada

'Tis the season to be tipsy! Between yesterday's spiked eggnog, stressful relatives, credit card debt and the hedonism of New Year's Eve, the next few days are probably going to be heavy on the hangovers.

We spoke with two health professionals to gather advice on how to best conquer the dreaded hangover.

"Drink lots of water," advises Dr. Cameron Barr, a family physician who works with the homeless at the Boyle McCauley Health Centre in Edmonton. "Not only will it help with the dehydration, but if you alternate booze and water, you'll wind up drinking less over the course of the night and have less of a hangover… Another good idea is to have a full stomach; digesting food slows down your absorption of alcohol, allowing your body to process the alcohol over a longer period of time."

Dr. Tammy Grime is a Doctor of Naturopathic medicine in Toronto. "Always rehydrate with lots of water, electrolytes and a touch of honey to replenish what is lost and to bring your blood sugar back up," she says. "Use a runner's drink like Endurolite … rather than Gatorade which has lots of food colouring and chemicals. Vitamin C is an effective antioxidant to mop up the toxic radicals.

"Eat something that has some fat, is gentle on the stomach and isn't sweet," she suggests.

"The most effective treatment for a hangover is time," says Barr. "You can't die from a hangover"

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Health & Beauty

Containing contagious coughs and colds

Woke up with the sniffles and a mild fever, but think you can make it to work?

Think again. Many people feel that going to work sick shows their dedication and devotion to the job — but that isn't the case! No one likes to be around a colleague who's clearly contagious. So rather than spreading germs to your co-workers, do them a favour — stay home, rest and recuperate. Re-circulated air in the office is the worst culprit in spreading germs round and round. To beat germs, the more effective thing you can do is combine bed rest with an over-the-counter cough and cold medication.

When you have a cold, staying home is the best thing you can do.

QUICK FACTS

• A common cold can linger due to the weakening of your immune system, which can be a direct result of stress or lack of proper rest. By choosing to work, you can actually prolong your recovery.

• Feeling nervous about calling your boss? Just remember, when you're sick, it's better for everyone if you stay home.

Here's a tip for making the case to your boss: call him or her first thing in the morning and remember to keep your statement clear and concise.

• No one wants to hear or has time to listen to a never-ending story about how sick you feel. Keep it to the facts.

• Next time you are sick, remember that nursing yourself back to health should be the first priority both for you and your fellow employees when facing cough and cold season.

COLD MYTHS — DEBUNKED

FICTION: The common cold is caused by cold temperatures

FACT: "Although exposure to cold combined with a weak immune system doesn't make matters better, people cannot get a cold from being cold," says Dr. David Greenberg a General Practitioner at St. Joseph's Health Centre. "A cold is actually caused by a virus." However, the colder it is outside, the more time we spend indoors with closed windows and air-conditioners, spreading a virus and infecting more people.

FICTION: Cold symptoms cannot be treated

FACT: Many people believe that cold symptoms are intended to help us get over the sickness quickly — so we shouldn't treat the symptoms with medicines. The truth is that the symptoms not only make no difference to the duration of the cold, they can help spread the bug to other people through coughing and sneezing.

Cold medications will not only make the illness more tolerable, they will also help to keep it better contained.

FICTION: You should feed a cold (and starve a fever).

FACT: There is absolutely no scientific evidence that eating excess will help cure a cold, so don't pig out in hopes of feeling better. Instead look to foods, that although cannot cure, may help cold sufferers feel better such as warm chicken soup, which can loosen nasal mucus and make breathing a bit easier.

NEWSCANADA.COM

Hit the bench if head hurts this holiday season

SPORTS HEALTH Hockey players take note: It's not OK to return to the ice if you still have a headache caused by a concussion.

Awareness of the dangers of concussions, which are common in hockey and football, has increased now that the NFL has tightened the rules on returning to play.

According the new NFL rules, players must not play if they have any signs of confusion or cognitive impairment.

Dr. Michael Cusimano, a neurosurgeon at Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital, found in a survey that many young Canadian hockey players and their parents didn't realize it wasn't safe to return to the ice post-concussion if the player still had a mild headache. NEWSCANADA.COM

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Health & Beauty

Resolve to improve your love life in 2010

The J Spot

Josey Vogels
metronews.ca/thejspot

This is the time of year when we start thinking about doing things differently next year. But why limit your resolutions to the classics, like quitting smoking or going to the gym? Make 2010 the year you do things differently when it comes to love!

Single?
Work on yourself before getting involved with someone new. Yes, a new relationship can be a great way to get over someone until you realize the fantastic new person you thought "was nothing like that last one" is suddenly exactly like the last one and the one thing they both share in common is you!

Trust your instincts. He didn't call when he said he would … again. She says she's totally over her ex so I'm sure those daily phone calls from him don't mean anything. It's easy to overlook bad behaviour when you're falling for someone and desperately want things to work out but by trusting your gut early on, you'll save yourself the tearful, angry, "In hindsight, I should have seen the signs" conversations with your friends when the person eventually breaks your heart.

In a relationship?
Listen. Stop worrying about being right and really listen to what your partner is saying. Imagine there is a bouncing ball (like in the cartoons) over your partner's words. Then follow the bouncing ball, to ensure you're really focusing on what he or she is saying and not simply busy formulating a rebuttal.

Speak up! About your sexual needs, desires, and frustrations (in a loving and kind way, of course). Encourage your partner to do the same.

Start a weekly sexual revelation ritual: You show me one thing you like or don't like and I'll show you mine.

Indulge your partner. Do something that they're into more than you are (either in bed or out). Not only does indulging your partner make them feel special and loved, you may surprise yourself and discover things you never knew you'd get into. And bonus, your partner will be more likely to indulge you right back.

Remember: Quality over quantity. Stop reading all those surveys that make you think everyone else is having way more sex than you are. Who cares if the Joneses are doing it seven times a week and twice on Sunday?

One, they're probably lying; and two, it's like looking at models in a fashion magazine: You'll never feel adequate. Are you two happy with your frequency? The quality?

If you're not, talk about it and figure something out. If you are, I don't care how often you're doing it and neither should the two of you. Here's to better loving in 2010!

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

Want some arugula with that?

HEALTHY FOOD This was the decade of the gourmeting of America, an era when cola wars and burger battles made way for artisanal sodas and grass-fed beef, when coffee went from a cup of Joe to a double shot-half-caff-soy-latte, ethnic was de rigueur and local became the new global.

It was a fine time to be a foodie. Not that everything exactly whet the appetite. Contaminated produce and soaring food prices turned our stomachs. And we lost some of the luminaries and institutions — Julia Child and Gourmet magazine — that had worked so diligently to brighten our meals.

More than ever before, issues long treated as the mushy peas on the collective American dinner plate — organics, local and sustainable agriculture, animal welfare — were getting sirloin-style treatment.

Walmart embraced organics — a $21-billion US industry, up from $3.6 billion in 1997 — a decision that broadened access but that critics feared would dilute the industry's standards.

Eating became a political act. Whether prompted by concerns about the quality of our childrens' school lunches, climate change or worker conditions in the Third World, more Americans started to vote with their stomachs.

Suddenly, the carbon footprint of your carrots was an issue.

Slow Food, a highly politicized Italian-born movement dedicated to preserving artisanal and sustainable foods, made its first major foray into the U.S. in 2008. It sputtered shortly after, but that such a Eurocentric group even made it on the American scene is rather remarkable and unprecedented.

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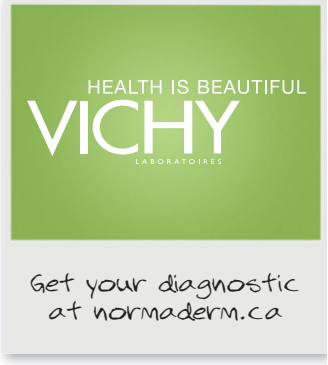

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The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus

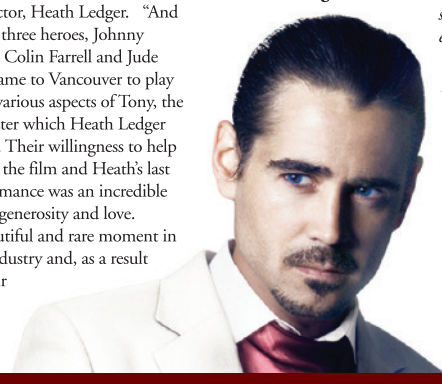
Actors **Depp**, **Law** and **Farrell** Ensure **Ledger's** Final Performance Be Shared

In **The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus** director, Terry Gilliam creates a thrilling, fantasy story which follows young Valentina (Lily Cole) and her father Dr. Parnassus (Christopher Plummer) who finds himself blessed with the gift of guiding the imagination of others. The great doctor is also cursed with a dark secret and a haunting deal he made with the devil (Tom Waits).

The film is a mystifying exploration with an award-winning cast, Heath Ledger, Johnny Depp, Colin Farrell and Jude Law starring as the enigmatic 'Tony' in this captivating story in a race against time.

Production on film **THE IMAGINARIUM OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS** was halted by the sudden passing of lead actor, Heath Ledger. "And so the three heroes, Johnny Depp, Colin Farrell and Jude Law came to Vancouver to play these various aspects of Tony, the character which Heath Ledger began. Their willingness to help rescue the film and Heath's last performance was an incredible act of generosity and love. A beautiful and rare moment in our industry and, as a result of their involvement, the film is even more special: it's more surprising; it's become funnier. All in all, it's a bit more magical," affectionately exclaims Gilliam.

For the first time, the actors **Johnny Depp**, **Jude Law** and **Colin Farrell** speak out about the film, their admiration for director, Terry Gilliam and actor, **Heath Ledger**.



Johnny Depp remembers *"… Heath is a marvel, Christopher Plummer beyond anything he's ever done, Waits as the Devil is a God, Lily Cole and Andrew Garfield, the very foundation, are spectacular, Verne Troyer simply kicks ass and as for my other cohorts, Colin Farrell and Jude Law, they most certainly did Master Ledger very proud, I salute them. .. Though the circumstances of my involvement are extremely heart-rending and unbelievably sad, I feel privileged to have been asked aboard to stand in on behalf of dear Heath."*

"… To help finish his final piece of work was a tribute I felt compelled to make. To help Terry finish his film was an honour paid to a man I adore…" recalls **Jude Law**.

"… one of cinemas finest actors and most generous of men. It will be this sense of love amidst the sadness I will remember most. Such a gift and an honor, from Heath, to be a part of the trail that he left behind. RIP Heath Ledger x." **Colin Farrell**.

Ledger will be forever immortalized on the silver screen.

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Music

Most unforgettable moments

From MJ's sudden death to Aerosmith's end, music went big in 2009

KEITH CARMAN
for Metro Canada

As yet another year draws to a close, it's time to reflect. What a phenomenally exciting 12 months we've had: an endless stream of musical highlights, surprises, letdowns and meltdowns. Sifting through enough juicy gossip to fill a novel, here are a few of music's more unforgettable moments in 2009.

Michael Jackson's death was one of the most surprising moments in the music world in 2009.

Highlights

Elton John and Billy Joel's first tour together in 15 years was as sweet as the piano greats' tunes of the past four decades. Fantastic, it was second only to a powerful live return from Irish rockers U2 on their 360 Degrees Tour. Massive and gripping, it re-established them on North American soil after their last stint, 1999's disappointing PopMart Tour.

On the borderline-comeback level, Beyoncé Knowles narrowly escaped losing her place as top female pop artist with the video for Single Ladies (Put A Ring On It).

The footage reinvigorated her career after latest studio album I Am...

Surprises

While it was a shock to see pop singer Lady Gaga appear out of nowhere to become one of the year's top-selling artists (like, multi-million status), two greater jaw-droppers indelibly altered the landscape of music this year.

A potential highlight, R&B sensation Whitney Houston finally got her act together after years of drug abuse and mistreatment by husband Bobby Brown. Hearing her incredibly bad full-length I Look To You and the effect such addictions on her live voice was a sad shocker.

Still, love him or hate him, nothing astonished more than hearing Michael Jackson, the self-proclaimed King Of Pop, was pronounced dead at the age of 50 in June. As expected, an onslaught of queries, accusations and disturbing merchandise—cologne made from his DNA—have followed.

Letdowns

Metal heads had hopes dashed as reports of a tour featuring the genre's biggest acts Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer and Anthrax were denied. Even more disturbing though, was this year's penchant for Auto-Tune, a studio device that corrects improper pitch for singers.

Meltdowns

Knowles was inadvertently part of 2009's most ridiculous meltdown thanks to hip hopper Kanye West.

He rudely interrupted teen idol Taylor Swift's acceptance speech for Best Female Video at the MTV Music Video Awards by grabbing the microphone to declare Beyoncé was unfairly beaten.

Tough guy West should have saved it for pop singer Rihanna's boyfriend, R&B artist Chris Brown. He was charged with physical abuse.

Lest we forget, rockers haven't been left out of the fray. Multi-million selling act Aerosmith were engaged with some rather public in-fighting, leaving singer Steven Tyler to officially announce his departure from the band on the eve of their 40th anniversary.

Here's hoping 2010 will offer up even greater highs, fewer lows and an endless stream of surprises.

Christmas is over, kick off the party with these tunes

CAM LINDSAY
for Metro Canada

Christmas Day may have come and gone, but there are probably a few more engagements on your social calendar between now and New Year's. And if you happen to be hosting, you may be wondering what music to play. Here are three albums recommended that everyone is sure to enjoy.

1. The House Party To End All House Parties.

To reach this lofty goal, you need something perpetually driven, where the energy never dies. Try For Lack Of A Better Name (Ultra) by Deadmaus. Their high-octane tech house isn't concerned with anything but keeping those feet moving.

2. The Dinner Party.

Try the colourful Malawian sounds of The Very Best's Warm Heart of Africa (Green Owl). Its feel-good vibes will have you dancing around the table à la Beetlejuice.

3. An Evening of Rock Band or Guitar Hero.

Try Ida Maria's Fortress 'Round My Heart (Mercury/Universal). Okay, so it might not be on either game, but they might just inspire you to start playing a real instrument in 2010.

Predictions for the year ahead in music

CAM LINDSAY
for Metro Canada

As 2009 winds down, my trusty crystal ball shows the forecast for 2010 to be a pretty big year in music.

Predictions for breakthroughs are always tough to call, but one name that already saw some significant penetration in 2009 was homegrown singing MC Drake. While his So Far Gone mixtape established him as more than just a former Degrassi star, friendships with Jay-Z, Kanye and Lil Wayne and an alleged fling with Rihanna will help his debut album Thank Me Later (due March) become one of 2010's biggest releases.

Drake

Some other safe bets include Ke$ha, whose Tik Tok will ride out 2009 on top of the charts. On Jan. 5, the L.A.-born electro pop singer will release her debut album Animal.

Avril Lavigne

And English pop star Cheryl Cole is looking to conquer North America the way her group Girls Aloud couldn't. Reports say she'll tour with the Black Eyed Peas, whose will.i.am co-produced her UK chart-topping album 3 Words.

Debut albums you may not hear on the radio but that will keep the blogosphere vehement are Brooklyn's beach pop pretty-boys The Drums and hip-pop noise crew Sleigh Bells, Britain's buoyant songstress Ellie Goulding and grime rapper Chipmunk, and the buzzsaw bubblegum of Los Angeles' Dum Dum Girls.

Plenty of established acts are also primed for big 2010 releases.

Expect comebacks by famous train-wrecks Amy Winehouse and Courtney Love (as Hole), as well as elaborate albums by alternative giants like Red Hot Chili Peppers, MGMT, Interpol, My Chemical Romance and Smashing Pumpkins, who will give away the 44-track Teargarden By Kaleidoscope for free.

Hipsters can take solace in records by LCD Soundsystem, Liars, Final Fantasy, Hot Chip and Vampire Weekend, teens will get fanatical about the return of Avril Lavigne and the first albums by Nick Jonas & The Administration and Gossip Girl star Leighton Meester, and hip-hop fans will get another Relapse from Eminem, long-awaited efforts from Diddy and Dr. Dre, and of course, yet another posthumous 2Pac album.

If you like your music live, there will be plenty of tours hitting Canadian soil. U2, Bon Jovi, Black Eyed Peas, Mötley Crüe, Taylor Swift, Nickelback, Guns N' Roses and Megadeth with Slayer will all fill arenas.

On a smaller scale, Alice In Chains, Magnetic Fields, Pavement, Tegan & Sara, Wilco, and Hot Chip with The xx will keep clubs sweaty and beyond capacity. Like I said, a pretty big year alright.

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Movies

EDITOR: KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Boxing Day at the movies

Unwind from holiday hassle with the season's latest flicks

InFocus

Richard Crouse

metronews.ca/infocus

"While everyone is returning unwanted Christmas gifts or fighting bargain hunters at the mall, it's the perfect time to relax and catch up flicks you missed in the hectic ramp-up to the holidays."

Movies and Boxing Day go together like turkey and stuffing.

While everyone is returning unwanted Christmas gifts or fighting bargain hunters at the mall it's the perfect time to relax and catch up on flicks you missed in the hectic ramp-up to the holidays.

The multiplexes are jammed with new movies at this time of year.

Go see Disney's first hand drawn fairy tale in twenty years, The Princess and the Frog, for the beautiful animation Stay for the great songs and first ever African-American princess.

Also kid friendly is Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel, which sees the three furry singing stars find some competition from The Chipettes, an all girl chipmunk group lead by (the voice of) Drew Barrymore.

If singing rodents aren't your thing how about an all singing, all dancing movie from the usually oh-so-serious Daniel Day Lewis? The Oscar winner stars in Nine, a musical about a film director juggling relationships with his wife, mistress, muse, agent and mother all while wearing cool Italian suits.

If twisty-turny relationships turn your crank but an overdose of Christmas carols has put you off music for the week, you may find some yuks in watching Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin fight over Meryl Streep in the comedy It's Complicated or the soon-to-be-divorced couple Hugh Grant and Sarah Jessica Parker enter the witness-protection program in Did You Hear About the Morgans?.

If you have time on your hands — or simply want a break from Christmas house guests — James Cameron's two-and-a-half-hour sci fi epic Avatar is the longest movie in current release.

Can't make the trip to the theatre? There's something on DVD or Blu-ray for everyone. For the kids there's Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince and G-Force.

Once the tots have gone to bed and grandma has had an extra sherry or two check out Trailer Park Boys: Countdown to Liquor Day, Inglourious Basterds or The Hangover for some adult entertainment.

For the music lover in the house there's Taking Woodstock and the excellent guitar rock doc It Might Get Loud.

For the lovelorn, (500) Days of Summer should confirm that love can be fleeting, and for the romantics, Julie & Julia should verify that food always tastes better with someone you love.

Whether staying home or going out, there are plenty of options to help while away a lazy Boxing Day.

Richard Crouse's Movie Show can be seen every Sunday at 6:30 p.m. on the E! Channel; mrchaos33@hotmail.com.

Nine, starring Penelope Cruz, above, makes for some showy musical fun.

Heading to the after-Christmas sales? Nab a few favourite films

KEITH CARMAN
for Metro Canada

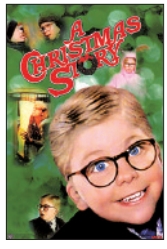
Movies: Necessary stress reduction after particularly frantic Christmas responsibilities (and an imposing New Year's Day hangover) or other occasions when a time-killer is of the essence.

Boxing Day: Great for getting those timeless flicks you'll watch enough to think you can actually wear out a DVD.

Why not unite the two? While you're out bargain hunting today, here are some new and old DVDs you should consider buying. They are the perfect way to keep entertained during that stay-cations, rainy weekends, sick days or any other times in the year when you feel like kicking back on the couch.

HOLIDAY

A CHRISTMAS STORY — The tale of a boy and his desired gift, a BB gun that "will shoot your eye out, kid" is reminiscent of at least one festive mishap we've all had.



COMEDY

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF — Who hasn't lived through Bueller vicariously? This is the ultimate goof off movie for days when going to work makes us feel like Sisyphus pushing that boulder uphill.

STEP BROTHERS — Even grown-ups need a no-brainer movie occasionally. Mission accomplished as two 40 year-olds act like rude toddlers. Dumb fun not suitable for, well, some adults, to be honest.

ACTION/DRAMA

ANGELS & DEMONS — The prequel to author Dan Brown's The DaVinci Code is another church-meets-state thriller starring who-could-hate-him Tom Hanks and made renegade-style by who-could-hate-him director Ron Howard. Who could hate it?

THE DARK KNIGHT — Anti-hero central. Batman's not so cutesy, The Joker is a total badass. Don't argue.

HORROR

DEAD SNOW — Innovating on the greats (Evil Dead, Dead Alive), this indie flick turned global success finds teens fighting Nazi zombies in a Norwegian cabin. As hilarious as it is gory.

FAMILY

UP — The name Pixar (Cars, Monsters Inc.) is enough reason to see this film. It's a heart-warming tale involving talking dogs, flying houses and life lessons capable of jerking tears from grumbly dads like this one.

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS — Boasting both an adorable character in gelatinous dimwit blob B.O.B. and a surprising homage to classic '50s B-flicks, this is an enduring winner.

TELEVISION

PUSHING DAISIES, SEASON ONE — A baker able to bring the dead back to life for one minute — longer if someone else dies in their place — resuscitates his childhood love. Insanity ensues and yes, it gets weirder. Comedy? Yup. Drama? Certainly. Indelibly interesting? Hot damn!

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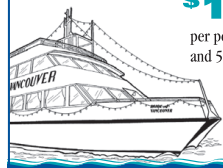

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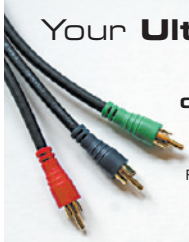

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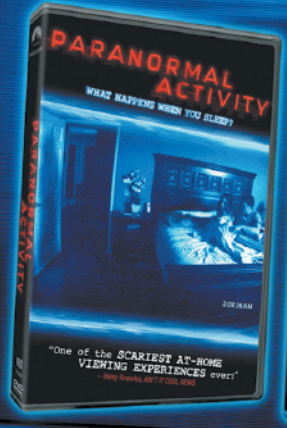
THE HORROR PHENOMENON FANS EVERYWHERE DEMANDED IS COMING HOME.
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY



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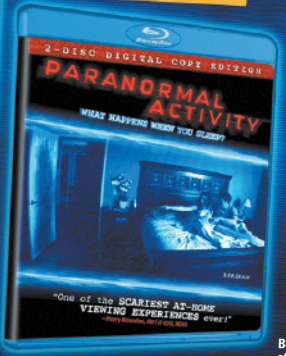

Blu-ray disc includes digital copy of the film shown in theatres only.

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During the holidays
For more celebrity news and entertainment gossip during the holidays, visit metronews.ca/entertainment. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

2009: The year of celebrity deaths

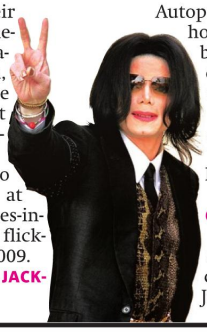
Year in Review

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

Headliners in life and death, the many stars who died this past year were a sure hit to the Hollywood community.

While some were shrouded in controversy, and others premature accidents, their deaths permeated international media, marking one last moment in the limelight.

Here, Metro looks back at the names-in-lights that flickered out in 2009.



MICHAEL JACKSON

When rumors began to circulate on June 25 that Michael Jackson went into cardiac arrest at his home, the whole world speculated whether the King of Pop was hanging up his crown for good.

It would only be hours before the 50-year-old pop star's death was confirmed, an event that graced the front pages of newspapers everywhere and brought the Internet to a crawl.

Autopsies concluded homicide prompted by a deadly drug combination caused Jackson's death, a final puzzling piece in the troubled artist's life.

FARRAH FAWCETT

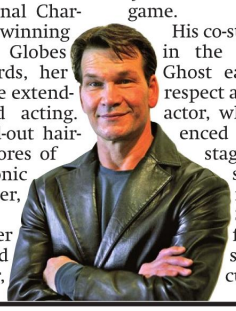
Surely the year's darkest day for the celebrity world, June 25 also saw the death of actress and sex symbol Farrah Fawcett at 62.

Despite coming to fame as one of the original Charlie's Angels and winning several Golden Globes and Emmy awards, her cultural influence extended well beyond acting. Fawcett's flipped-out hairstyle inspired scores of women; her iconic pinup poster, countless men.

Three years after being diagnosed with anal cancer, Fawcett died, leaving behind video documentation of her battle, which was later turned into the documentary Farrah's Story.

PATRICK SWAYZE

Cancer also claimed celebrated actor Patrick Swayze on Sept. 14, about one month after his 57th birthday. Swayze chasséd his way into the spotlight with his role as a dance instructor in the 1987 film Dirty Dancing, which inspired a stage musical, reality TV show and video game.



His co-starring role in the 1990 film Ghost earned him respect as a serious actor, which influenced his future stage and screen roles. Swayze finally succumbed to pancreatic cancer less than two years after being diagnosed.

NATASHA RICHARDSON

After an accidental fall and resulting head injury during a skiing lesson at a Mont Tremblant, Que., resort, English actress Natasha Richardson died on March 14 at 45. Daughter of famed actress Vanessa Redgrave and British new wave auteur Tony Richardson, and wife of actor Liam Neeson, Richardson was a respected actress in her own right. A performer on stage and screen, she was praised for her roles in Gothic, The Handmaid's Tale, Nell and Widows' Peak.

Notable 2009 celebrity deaths

- Mar. 22 – Jade Goody, 27, reality TV star (cancer)
- April 25 – Bea Arthur, 86, actress (cancer)
- June 3 – David Carradine, 72, actor (autoerotic asphyxiation)
- June 28 – Billy Mays, 50, TV pitchman (heart disease)
- July 17 — Walter Cronkite, 92, broadcaster (cerebral vascular disease)
- Aug. 6 – John Hughes, 59, filmmaker (heart failure)
- Aug. 28 – Adam (DJ AM) Goldstein, 36, disc jockey (accidental drug overdose)
- Sept. 16 – Mary Travers, 70, singer, Peter Paul & Mary (chemotherapy complications)
- Oct. 10 – Stephen Gately, 33, singer, Boyzone (natural causes)
- Dec. 20 — Brittany Murphy, 32, actress (cardiac arrest)

The names we loved to hate this year

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

Carrie Prejean. Levi Johnston. Octomom. If these names mean anything to you, chances are you've dragged your eyeballs across the cover of the celebrity tabloids during 2009. It's no reason to feel guilty — who could resist taking an interest in a mischievous headline like "Ashton Reveals Worst Part of Being Married to Demi." Admit it, you'd like to know.

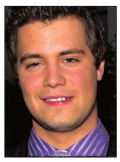
Whether it's the nasty domestic squabble between singers Chris Brown and Rihanna to the extramarital speculation about Tiger Woods, there's been no shortage of outrageous celebrity gossip in 2009.

Jon Gosselin

"Gossip is immortal," said Lainey Lui, reporter on CTV's etalk. "I just think that it's a pastime that, through technology, has become ubiquitous."

Carrie Prejean

She should know. Lui runs the popular website laineygossip.com, which gets upwards of 200,000 unique visitors per week. She insists our celebrity fascination has everything to do with the pervasiveness of the Web: "(The Internet) has brought us closer to celebrities in a way we've never been able to be. It's as though we can't get close enough."



Levi Johnston

And with that, here are three nutty and ubiquitous tabloid tales people loved in 2009:

JON & KATE — Whether it's the split-up reality TV couple's squabbles over cash or Jon's inability to spell, it seemed the Gosselins could make headlines even if Jon just ordered a bagel at Dunkin' Donuts. And that's not even including the countless photo ops and shameless media appearances.

CARRIE PREJEAN — The former Miss California may not have read "where it says you shouldn't get breast implants" in the Bible, but a lot of people sure read about the discovery of her sex tapes.

LEVI JOHNSTON — The estranged father of Sarah Palin's grandson earned headline status by announcing he was doffing his clothes for Playgirl magazine. Big promise, and, ahem, short on delivery.

2009 highlights

BIRTHS
- Seal/Heidi Klum – (Lou Sulola Samuel)
- Nicole Ritchie/Joel Madden – (Sparrow James Midnight)
- Matthew Broderick/Sarah Jessica Parker – (Marion Loretta Elwell)
- Charlie Sheen/Brooke Allen – (Bob/Max)
- Ben Affleck/Jennifer Garner – (Seraphina Rose Elizabeth)

MARRIAGES
- Josh Duhamel/Fergie (January)
- Gisele Bundchen/Tom Brady (February)
- David Letterman/Regina Lasko (March)

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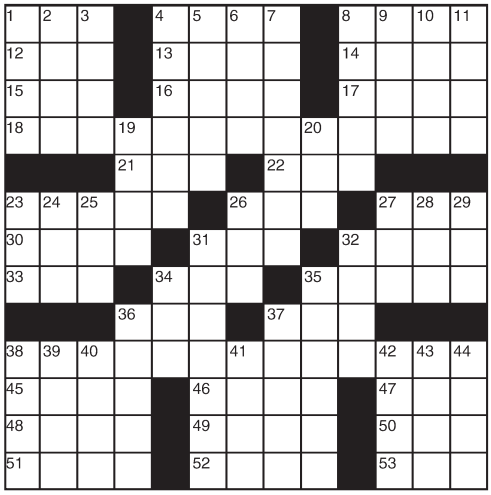
Take Five



ACROSS

1 Chum
4 Body powder
8 Advantage
12 Actress Thurman
13 Needle case
14 Cozy corner
15 Hoover's org.
16 Word of warning
17 Sand formation
18 Very bright color
21 Prompt
22 Londoner's letter
23 Honey bunch?
26 Lustrous black
27 "See ya"
30 Indiana city
31 Answer to the Sphinx's riddle
32 Disposition
33 Copper head?
34 "— the ramparts ..."
35 Less
36 Lisa Simpson's instrument
37 Skedaddled
38 Youth group that went co-ed in 1975
45 Hodgepodge
46 Annual fashion award
47 A billion years
48 Crazy
49 Largest of the seven
50 Past
51 Option from Howie Mandel
52 — -do-well
53 Morning moisture

DOWN

1 Compact disc?
2 Both (Prefix)
3 Den
4 Liturgical hymn
5 Expiate
6 Breather?
7 Kane, e.g.
8 Over and done with
9 Sullen
10 Vanished
11 Supplemented, with "out"
19 Beige
20 Trawler gear
23 Resort
24 Symbol of intrigue
25 "All the Things You —"
26 Discordance
27 "— voyage!"
28 Thee
29 Mag. staffers
31 Popular foreign cuisine
32 Revealing skirt
34 Lummox
35 Hungarian
36 Reel
37 Tend a stubborn ribbon
38 Freezing
39 Lotion additive
40 Isinglass, e.g.
41 Got up
42 Peruse
43 Theater box
44 Winter forecast

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

					1		7	
6	1				5	2		
	9		2			4		
	2			4	3		5	
8								6
	7		6	5			2	
		7			9		8	
		2	1				9	3
	4		8					

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

9	1	7	6	4	8	2	5	3
4	6	5	2	3	7	9	1	8
8	3	2	1	5	9	4	6	7
1	7	4	9	8	6	5	3	2
5	8	3	4	2	1	7	9	6
6	2	9	5	7	3	8	4	1
3	5	8	7	1	4	6	2	9
7	4	6	3	9	2	1	8	5
2	9	1	8	6	5	3	7	4

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca

Metro Recipe of the Day

Fruity Yogurt with Chocolate Chip and Nut Crunch

INGREDIENTS:
4 chocolate chip shortbread cookies
1/2 cup (125 mL) toasted hazelnuts, chopped
2 tbsp (25 mL) clear honey
2 small bananas, sliced
4 ready-to-eat dried apricots, chopped
2 1/2 cups (600 mL) plain yogurt

METHOD:
1. Put shortbread biscuits in plastic bag and crush coarsely using rolling pin. Tip into bowl and mix with toasted hazelnuts and honey.
2. Mix bananas and apricots into yogurt and divide among four bowls. Top with biscuit, nut and honey mixture. Serve at once.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
If someone tries to lay the blame for some kind of failure at your door you must let them know that you reject the accusation that it is all your fault.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Something you have believed in since you were young will be called into question over the next few days and you may be tempted to abandon it.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
As Mercury, your ruler, turns retrograde this weekend, if you overlook an error, deliberate or otherwise, it could be costly.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
If there is something important you need to say to a loved one, say it immediately. It won't be so easy to say it tomorrow.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Hide your feelings about the people you are working with and get on with a job that can only be completed successfully if you pull together.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
As Mercury, your ruler, turns retrograde today you won't be popular if you cannot deliver. Don't let your enthusiasm carry you away.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Make it your aim to cheer up someone who is feeling a bit depressed this weekend. Remind them that living is supposed to be fun.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Get up, get out and start doing the things that will take you from where you are now to where you want to be in the not too distant future.

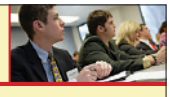
SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
You need to make up your mind about an offer and you need to do so quickly. If you put it off any longer the offer may be withdrawn.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Mercury turns retrograde in your sign this weekend, so if there is something you need to say then say it now while the words still come easy to you.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
It may appear to others as if you never have self-doubts but you suffer from indecision as much as anyone and that will be more evident than usual.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Your ideas and opinions are about to undergo a radical change. What you believe now will not be what you believe early in 2010.

The Canadian College *of* Linguistics



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0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 36 MONTHS‡

$15,523†† SELLING PRICE

LEASE FOR **$203†** PER MONTH PER 60 MONTHS
Includes Freight and PDE

LEASE RATE **2.9%**
$0 SECURITY DEPOSIT
$12,173 TOTAL LEASE OBLIGATION

$0 DOWN PAYMENT

Highest horsepower in its class (122 HP)[2] • Most rear leg room in its class (966 mm)[3] • Nissan Advanced Airbag System with 6 airbags • Winner of a Consumers Digest Best Buy Award[4]

City: 7.9L/100km (36 MPG)
Highway: 6.3L/100km (45 MPG)▲▲

2010 REDESIGNED
SENTRA 2.0

DON'T PAY FOR 90 DAYS

0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 36 MONTHS‡

$16,523†† SELLING PRICE

LEASE FOR **$199†** PER MONTH FOR 60 MONTHS
Includes Freight and PDE

LEASE RATE **4.9%**
$0 SECURITY DEPOSIT
$1,950 DOWN PAYMENT
$13,905 TOTAL LEASE OBLIGATION

★★★★★ 5-STAR RATING FOR FRONT-IMPACT CRASH SAFETY[5]

Standard ABS and Electronic Brake force Distribution (EBD) • Power door locks • Nissan Advanced Airbag System with 6 airbags

City: 8.4L/100km (34 MPG)
Highway: 6.4L/100km (44 MPG)▲▲

2.0 SL MODEL SHOWN▲
www.nissan.ca/sentra

VISIT YOUR LOCAL NISSAN RETAILER TODAY OR NISSAN.CA FOR DETAILS. UP TO **$1000** REBATE■ | NISSAN GRAD PROGRAM

NISSAN. PROUD SPONSOR OF THE NFL.

*90 days no payments program applies only to purchase finance offers on new 2009 and 2010 Nissan models (except 2009/2010 Altima Hybrid, GT-R, 350Z Roadster and Coupe and 370Z™ Roadster and Coupe) purchased and delivered before January 4th, 2010. Offers available only through Nissan Canada Finance on approved credit. Offer only available on special low rate contracts, and does not apply to Nissan Canada Finance standard rate programs. May not be combined with cash purchase offer. Monthly payments deferred for 90 days. Contracts will be extended accordingly. Interest charge (if any) will not accrue during the first 60 days of the contract. After the 60 days, interest (if any) starts to accrue and the purchaser will repay the principal and interest (if any) monthly from the 90th day over the term of the contract. Offer available on terms up to 72 months. **No purchase necessary. For full rules and how to enter, visit www.nissan.ca/holidaykickoff. Contest closes January 10, 2010. Three (3) Grand Prizes available to be won, each consisting of a trip for two (2) people to 2010 Pro Bowl and Super Bowl XLIV in South Florida. Approximate retail value of each Grand Prize is $10,000.00 (CDN). Random draw will be held on January 12, 2010 in Mississauga, ON. Must be a resident of Canada (excluding Québec), over age of majority. Odds of winning depend on the total number of eligible entries received. Correct answer to mathematical skill testing question required. Limit of one (1) entry per person/household. (c) 2009 NFL Ventures LP. Team names/logos are trademarks of the teams indicated. All other NFL-related trademarks are trademarks of the National Football League. ‡0% purchase financing for up to 36 months available on 2010 Altima Sedan (excluding Hybrid), Sentra and Versa Hatch models. Finance Example for a new 2010 Altima Sedan 2.5 S (T4RG10 AE00): $26,498 Selling Price including ($1,400) freight and PDE, financed at 0% APR for 36 months equals $597.17 per month with $5,000 down payment or equivalent trade-in. Cost of borrowing is $0 for a total obligation of $26,498. Up to $84 PPSA, license, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. Finance offers are available on approved credit through Nissan Canada Finance for a limited time, may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. Retailers are free to set individual prices. Offers valid between December 1st, 2009 and January 4th, 2010. †Lease Examples: $26,498/$15,523/$16,523 Selling Price for a new 2010 Altima Sedan 2.5 S (T4RG10 AE00)/2010 Versa Hatch 1.8 S (B5LG50 AA00)/2010 Sentra (C4LG50 AA00) at 2.9%/2.9%/4.9% lease rate for a 48/60/60 month term. Monthly payment is $319/$203/$199 including ($1,400)/($1,325)/($1,325) freight and PDE, with $3,550/$0/$1,950 down payment, and $0/$0/$0 security deposit. License, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. All prices are subject to change without notice. Retailer may lease for less. Lease based on a maximum of 24,000 km per year with excess charged at $0.10/km. Total lease obligation is $18,848/$12,173/$13,905. Lease and finance offers are available on approved credit through Nissan Canada Finance for a limited time, may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. Retailers are free to set individual prices. Offers valid between December 1st, 2009 and January 4th, 2010. ††Selling Price for a new 2010 Altima Sedan 2.5 S (T4RG10 AE00), CVT transmission/2010 Versa Hatch 1.8 S (B5LG50 AA00), manual transmission/2010 Sentra (C4LG50 AA00), manual transmission. Freight and PDE charges ($1,400)/($1,325)/($1,325) are included. License, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. All prices are subject to change without notice. Retailer may sell for less. ▲Actual mileage may vary with driving conditions - use for comparison only. ▲▲Models shown $33,298 Selling Price for a new 2010 Altima Sedan 3.5 SR (T4SG10 AA00), CVT transmission/$18,723 Selling Price for a new 2010 Versa Hatch 1.8 SL (B5RG50 AA00), manual transmission/$24,423 Selling Price for a new 2010 Sentra 2.0 SL (C4TG10 AA00), CVT transmission. Freight and PDE charges ($1,400)/($1,500)/($1,325) are included. License, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. All prices are subject to change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. Retailer may sell for less. [1]The Nissan Altima received the lowest number of problems per 100 vehicles among midsize cars in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2009 U.S. Initial Quality Study®[M]. Study based on responses from 80,930 U.S. new-vehicle owners, measuring 245 models and measures opinions after 90 days of ownership. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of owners surveyed in February-May 2009. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com. [2]WardsAuto.com's Lower Small segment, January 2009. [3]WardsAuto.com's Lower Small segment, January 2009. 2010 Versa vs. 2009 competitors. [4]The 2010 Versa Hatch is winner of a Consumers Digest Best Buy Award. The Best Buy Seal is a registered trademark of Consumers Digest Communications, LLC, used under license. [5]Government star ratings are part of the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) New Car Assessment Program (www.safercar.gov). U.S. model tested. Please see www.safercar.gov for up to date information. ■For a limited time receive up to $1,000 Grad discount available on select models when leasing or financing a new 2009 or 2010 Nissan. See retailer for complete Grad program details.